

## Healthy Homes

was a collaborative effort of the Boston Public Health Commission's Asthma Prevention and Control Program, Boston Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, Boston Childhood Injury Prevention Program, Bureau of Community Initiatives, Community Health Education Center, and Environmental Hazards Program.

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Thomas M. Menino, Mayor



# healthy homes

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ASTHMA, LEAD, AND INJURIES TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH

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## What you need to know about asthma, lead, and injuries to protect your family's health

We know you are concerned about your children's health, and want to do whatever you can to keep them safe and healthy. **What you might not know is that some of the major health risks for children such as asthma, lead poisoning and injuries are often found in their home!** This guide talks about risks or hazards found in each room of the home, what you can do about them, and who to call for help or more information. **The guide can help you make your home safer and healthier for your family.**



**Children are more vulnerable to health problems such as asthma, lead poisoning and injuries than adults.** While children are growing, their brains and bodies are growing, too, and the systems in their bodies (such as their nervous system, lungs, and immune systems) are developing. Because of this, children can easily be harmed by things that might not harm adults in the same way, like dust, lead, and chemicals.

### • LEAD

**Lead is the number one environmental threat to the health of children.** Children under age six are most at risk for the harmful effects of lead poisoning, including brain damage, kidney damage, learning disabilities, behavior problems, and many other effects.

**If your home was built before 1978, it probably has lead paint.** Lead paint was used to paint the inside and outside of homes, especially windows, walls, and porches. Windows, doors, and other areas which are exposed to regular friction are the most dangerous places in the home because of dangerous and invisible lead dust.

**Lead can also be found in soil outside the home.** This guide will help you learn how to protect your child from lead in and outside the home.

## • ASTHMA

**Asthma is a disease of the airways, or breathing tubes, which bring air in and out of your lungs.** The breathing tubes swell, tighten and fill up with thick mucus, making it difficult to breathe.

Children with asthma have airways that are sensitive to triggers, or things that start their asthma. **To control the asthma, you must identify the triggers that make your child's asthma worse, and avoid those things.**

**Since children spend much of their time at home, it is important to identify triggers in the home.** Some common asthma triggers in the home include dust and dust mites, mold, cigarette smoke or other smoke, cleaning products, chemicals, pets with fur or feathers, rodents or roaches, and perfumes. This guide will help you figure out ways to eliminate some of the triggers in your home.

## • INJURY

**Unintentional injury is the leading cause of visits to hospital emergency departments for children under fourteen.** Home injuries are caused most often by falls, poisoning, fire and burns, drowning, suffocation, choking, and guns. Young children are most at risk from unintentional injuries in the home since this is where they spend most of their time.

Simple ways to protect your children from injury include safety devices such as window guards, smoke alarms, and other childproofing aids throughout your home. Make sure that poisons and guns are stored safely. You will find tips on how to protect your child, room by room, in this guide.

## • ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

**Environmental hazards can cause many health problems, particularly for young children and the elderly.** Some hazards, such as carbon monoxide gas, are invisible. Others are products that people use every day, including cleaning products, rat poison, pesticides, or automotive products.

**Children can be poisoned if they get into harmful products.** If you spray or pump something, it goes into the air, and when you and your family breathe, those chemicals can enter your bodies. Some of the health problems from environmental hazards include asthma attacks, headaches, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, sleepiness, brain damage, and cancer.

This guide will give you helpful information on how to reduce the use of these chemicals, and will also give you important phone numbers in case your child is exposed to chemicals.

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## electrical outlets

**FIRES AND ELECTRIC SHOCK.** Extension cords and electric cords that are overloaded or damaged can cause fires or electric shock. Small children can get shocked by touching an electrical outlet.

**What to do:**

- Throw away damaged cords.
- Unplug appliance and extension cords after use.
- Keep appliance cords wound up and out of your children's reach.
- Place outlet covers on electrical outlets.
- Never run an electrical cord under a rug or through doorways.
- Use GFCI outlet (Ground Fault Circuit Interruption outlet) in the kitchen and bathroom to prevent electric shock.

**Who to call:**

Your landlord to install GFCI outlets.

For information on electrical safety: BPHC's Childhood Injury Prevention Program (617) 534-5197

## furniture

**PETS.** The fur, feathers, saliva and urine of pets are asthma triggers.

**What to do:** If a person in your house has asthma, it is best not to have a pet with fur or feathers. If you can't give your pet away, keep it off your furniture.

**CIGARETTE SMOKING** is an asthma trigger. Tobacco smoke can make children sick and cause ear infections. Small children may be poisoned by eating cigarette butts.

**CIGARETTE SMOKING** can also cause fires.

**What to do:**

- Do not allow smoking in areas where a person with asthma spends time.
- Only smoke outside. Try to cut back on smoking.
- Put cigarettes out in water.
- Keep cigarettes, lighters and matches away from your children.

**Who to call:** For quit smoking programs: 1-(800)-TRYTOSTOP (1-800-879-8678)

## all living areas

**SMALL TOYS AND OBJECTS.** Children under age three can choke on small toys and objects. Balloons are the leading cause of choking death for children.

**What to do:**

- Make sure that the toys are appropriate for your child's age.
- Keep small toys, puzzles and game pieces out of reach of young children.

**Who to call:** U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Hotline 1 (800) 638-2772

## heating system

**BURNS.** Kids can get burned by touching radiators.

**What to do:** Cover exposed radiators with radiator covers to prevent burns.

**RADIATORS, FORCED HOT AIR VENTS.** Forced hot air vents can blow dust into the room which is an asthma trigger. Heating systems can be a source of carbon monoxide.

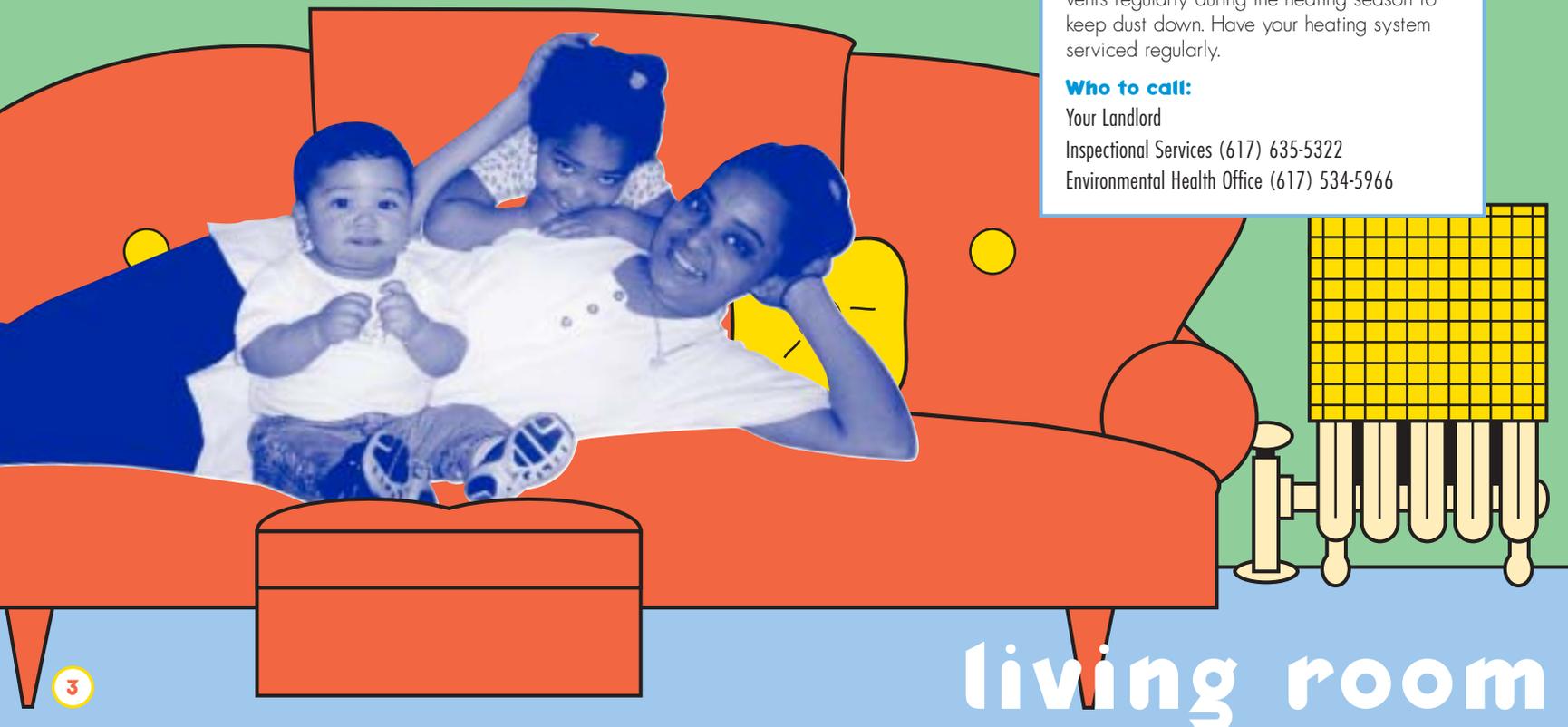
**What to do:** Change the filters in the air vents regularly during the heating season to keep dust down. Have your heating system serviced regularly.

**Who to call:**

Your Landlord

Inspection Services (617) 635-5322

Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966



## windows

**LEAD PAINT** is often found in homes built before 1978. Lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities and brain damage. The paint can chip or peel and become dust. Lead dust cannot be seen and can poison children when they breathe it in or ingest it by putting their fingers or toys in their mouths.

### What to do:

- Have your home inspected for lead by a licensed lead inspector or by the BPHC's Lead Program.
- Cover holes with wallpaper or contact paper on a temporary basis.
- Wet wipe window sills and wells and wet mop floors to keep lead dust down. Vacuum with a HEPA vacuum.
- Before starting any renovations, learn how to protect your family. Never scrape or sand paint.

**Who to call:** For free lead inspections and hazard control if a child under six lives in the home: BPHC's Lead Program (617) 534-5966

**FALLS.** Children are more severely injured from window falls than from any other falls.

**What to do:** Install window guards/window locks or make sure windows cannot open more than 4". Open windows from top down. Move furniture away from window.

**Who to call:** BPHC's Kids Can't Fly Program (617) 534-5197

**CURTAINS AND VENETIAN BLINDS** collect dust which is an asthma trigger.

**What to do:** Wipeable shades are best. Wash fabric curtains in hot water weekly to kill dust mites.

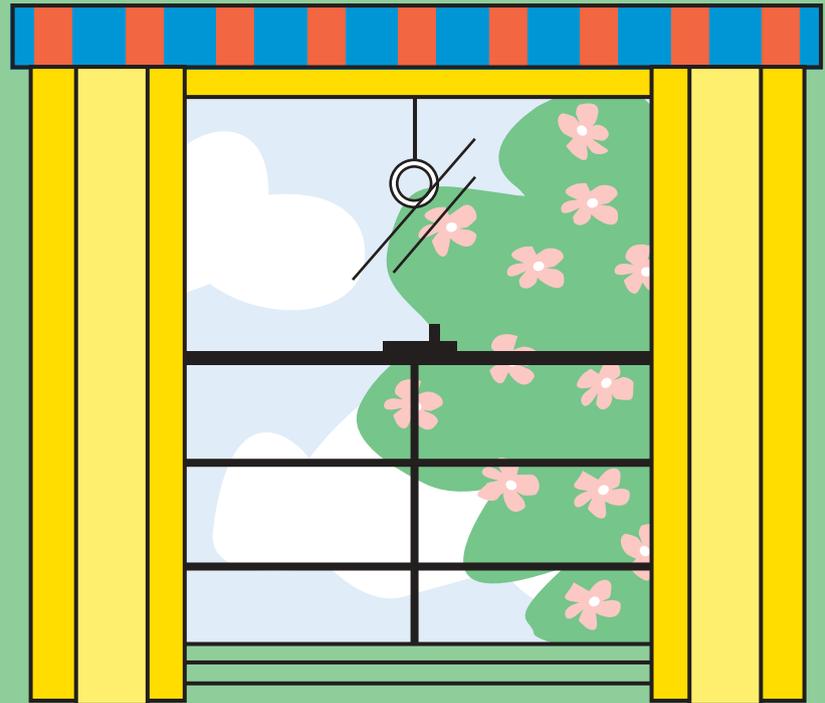
### CORDS OF WINDOW BLINDS.

Children can strangle on the cords of window blinds and corded window shades.

**What to do:** Cut window cord loops and knot ends to prevent children from getting strangled.

**Who to call:** For free window safety kit:

Window Covering Safety Council  
1-800-506-4636



## furniture

**DUST AND DUST MITES.** Fabric furniture collects dust and dust mites which are asthma triggers.

### What to do:

- Wipeable furniture is best because dust mites can't live on it.
- Vacuum fabric furniture regularly.

**SHARP EDGES OF FURNITURE.** Kids can bump, hurt or cut themselves on sharp edges of furniture.

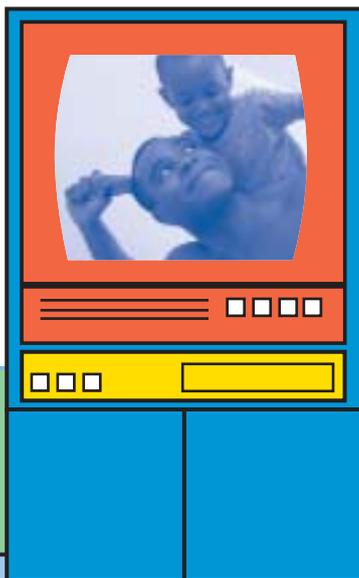
### What to do:

- Place tall and heavy furniture against the wall.
- Cushion the sharp edges of furniture and fireplace hearths with corner and edge bumpers.
- Door stops and holders can prevent children's fingers from being pinched or crushed in doors.

## wall-to-wall carpeting

**DUST MITES** grow in carpeting and are an asthma trigger.

**What to do:** Remove carpeting if possible or vacuum often when the person with asthma is not in the room. HEPA vacuums (High Efficiency Particulate Air-filter vacuums) help reduce dust mites. Don't use wet steam cleaners since they contribute to dust mites and mold.



# / family room

## sink & refrigerator

**DRINKING WATER.** In older homes, pipes may have lead that can get into the water. Lead is poisonous and can cause health problems in children and adults.

**What to do:** In the morning, before you use the water, run it cold for 2–3 minutes to flush the pipes. Start with cold water for cooking, drinking, or making baby formula. If you use a water filter, change the filter according to the instructions.

**Who to call:**

For information on drinking water quality:  
Boston Water and Sewer Commission (617) 330-9400

**HOT WATER, EXPOSED HOT PIPES.**

Children can get burns from hot water or from touching hot pipes.

**What to do:** Set the temperature of the water heater (which is usually in the basement) to 120°F or lower. Cover exposed pipes.

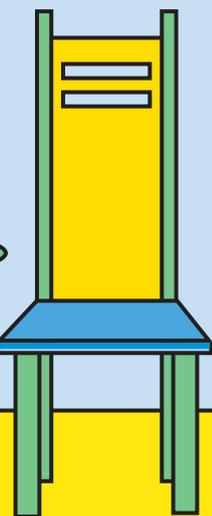
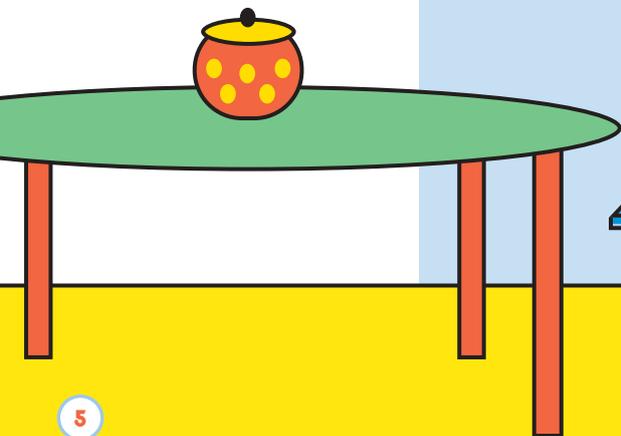
**Who to call:** Your Landlord or Inspectional Services (617) 635-5322 to lower the water temperature.

## kitchen table

**CHOKING ON FOOD.** Children under age four can choke on small pieces of food such as hot dogs, grapes, raw carrots, hard candies, nuts, or popcorn.

**What to do.** Watch children at mealtime. Chop foods into bits before giving them to young children.

**Who to call:** Emergency 911



## kitchen cabinets

**HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS** are poisonous and can cause burns, rashes and serious injury. Odors from household cleaners can also be asthma triggers.

**What to do:**

- Store cleaning supplies, medicines, and pet supplies out of children's reach or in cabinets or drawers with safety latches. Store them in their original containers and follow the directions on label.
- Buy products with safety caps or child-resistant caps.
- Don't store poisonous substances in containers that look similar to those that hold things your child eats or drinks.
- Use as few household cleaners as possible and buy only what you need.

**Who to call:**

Put poison control numbers on all phones:  
Massachusetts Poison Center 1 (800) 222-1222  
Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966

**KNIVES, SCISSORS, & SHARP OBJECTS.**

Children may think that knives are toys and may cut themselves.

**What to do:** Put away knives, utensils, razors, scissors, and other sharp objects in drawers or cabinets with safety latches.

**Who to call:** Emergency Services 911

## kitchen cabinets

**BUG SPRAYS AND POWDERS.** Pesticides are poisonous. Exposure to pesticides can cause skin or eye irritation, vomiting, or brain damage. They come in sprays, powders, baits, or bombs and are used to kill pests such as cockroaches, ants, mice, or mold.

**What to do:**

- Don't use pesticides around children, pets, toys, or food.
- Store pesticides in their original containers, tightly closed in a locked cabinet.
- Use as few pesticides as possible and buy only what you need. Follow the directions for safe use.

**Who to call:**

Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966  
Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau (617) 727-3020

If a person is exposed to pesticides:

Emergency Services 911  
Massachusetts Poison Center  
1 (800) 222-1222

## stove

**ODORS AND FUMES** are asthma triggers. **STEAM** creates dampness which can cause mold growth.

**What to do:** Install a kitchen fan vented to the outdoors or open a window for ventilation when cooking.

**Who to call:** Your landlord to install fan.

**BURNS.** Children can get burned by touching hot pots or from stovetop spills.

**What to do:** When cooking, use back burners and turn pot handles to the back of the stove.

**FIRES.** Fires can start if pots are left unattended on the stove. Potholders and dishtowels can catch fire.

**What to do:**

- Keep your stove clear of anything not used for cooking.
- Have a working smoke alarm and fire extinguisher by the kitchen. Practice several fire escape routes from each room and choose a place to meet outside.

**Who to call:**

Emergency Services 911  
Boston Fire Department (617) 343-3397  
for fire safety tips

## stove

**CARBON MONOXIDE GAS** is a gas that you cannot see or smell. Carbon monoxide from gas stoves can build up and poison or kill people. Appliances that are not cleaned and well maintained produce more carbon monoxide.

**What to do:**

- Never use your stove to heat your house.
- Have your gas stove cleaned and serviced regularly.
- Keep your home well ventilated.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector. If the detector goes off, call 911 and leave the house right away.

**Who to call:**

Emergency Services 911  
Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966

## throughout kitchen

**ROACHES AND RODENTS** are asthma triggers. These pests need a way to enter your home and water and food to survive. Spraying pesticides does not get rid of roaches.

**What to do:**

- Plug, caulk, or repair leaks and holes.
- Place non-toxic traps under sink, behind refrigerator, and in the corners of rooms.
- Keep trash covered, and empty trash often.
- Keep food in tightly-closed containers.
- Wash dishes soon after eating.
- Clean sinks, tables and countertops often.

**Who to call:**

Your landlord  
Inspectional Services (617) 635-5322

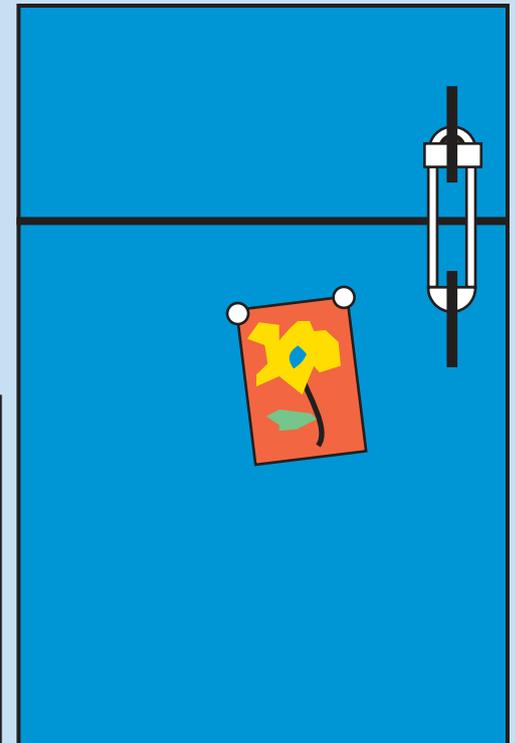
## sink & refrigerator

**MOLD AND MOISTURE.** Chronic dampness leads to mold growth which is an asthma trigger.

**What to do:** Repair any leaks that may cause moisture. Install a kitchen fan vented to the outdoors or open a window for ventilation. Empty water often from drip pans under the refrigerator.

**Who to call:**

Your landlord  
Inspectional Services (617) 635-5322  
Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966



## nightstand

**CIGARETTE SMOKING** is an asthma trigger. Smoking in bed is the leading cause of house fires.

### What to do:

- It is best not to smoke. If you are not ready to quit, smoke outside and cut back on smoking.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Don't smoke in the bedroom of a person with asthma.

**Who to call:** For a quit smoking program: 1-800-TRYTOSTOP (1-800-879-8678)

**FIRES.** Candles left unattended can start fires. Candles and incense give off smoke which is an asthma trigger. Children can start fires by playing with matches or lighters.

### What to do:

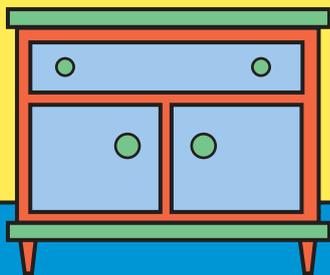
- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- Move lamps away from curtains or materials that can burn.
- Keep matches, candles and cigarette lighters away from your children.

**FIREARMS.** Firearm injuries are the second leading cause of death for young people, 10–24 years of age.

### What to do:

- The best way to protect your children against gun violence is to remove all guns from your home. If a gun is kept in your home, store it unloaded in a locked area. Store ammunition separately from a firearm in a locked area.
- Teach your children never to touch or play with a gun.

**Who to call:** Stop Handgun Violence 1-877-SAFEARMS (1-877-723-32767)



## beds

**MATTRESSES & BED LINENS** usually have dust and dust mites which are asthma triggers.

### What to do:

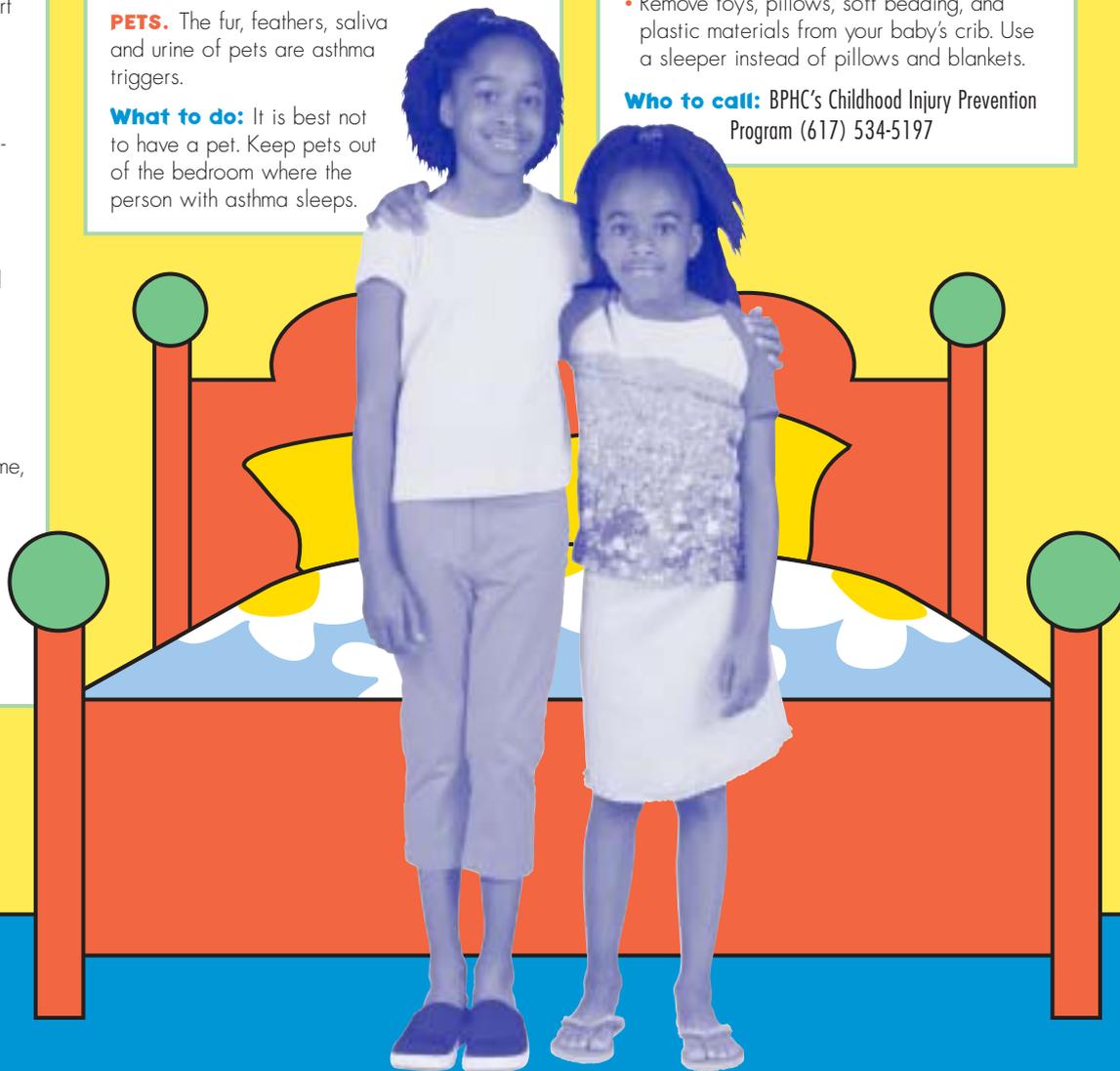
- Cover mattress and pillows in allergy blocking covers.
- Wash bed linens weekly in hot water.
- Limit stuffed animals and toys and wash weekly in hot water. Remove or limit other things that collect dust.
- Remove wall to wall carpeting.
- Keep clothes in closets and drawers.

### Who to call:

BPHC's Asthma Control Program (617) 534-5966

**PETS.** The fur, feathers, saliva and urine of pets are asthma triggers.

**What to do:** It is best not to have a pet. Keep pets out of the bedroom where the person with asthma sleeps.



## baby cribs

**BABY CRIBS** can cause choking or strangling. Babies can be trapped between the crib slats, mattress, and sheets where they can be strangled or smothered.

### What to do:

- Choose a firm mattress that fits the crib frame snugly.
- Make sure that sheets are secured around the mattress and cannot be pulled off by your baby.
- Check that the crib slats are less than 2" apart. Check that the corner posts are no higher than 1/16" above the top edge of the crib because a baby's clothing can catch on them.
- Remove toys, pillows, soft bedding, and plastic materials from your baby's crib. Use a sleeper instead of pillows and blankets.

**Who to call:** BPHC's Childhood Injury Prevention Program (617) 534-5197

## windows

**LEAD PAINT** is often found in homes built before 1978. Lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities and brain damage. The paint can chip or peel and become dust. Lead dust cannot be seen and can poison children when they breathe it in or ingest it by putting their fingers or toys in their mouths.

### What to do:

- Have your home inspected for lead by a licensed lead inspector or by the BPHC's Lead Program.
- Cover holes with wallpaper or contact paper on a temporary basis.
- Wet wipe window sills and wells and wet mop floors to keep lead dust down. Vacuum with a HEPA vacuum.
- Before starting any renovations, learn how to protect your family. Never scrape or sand paint.

**Who to call:** For free lead inspections and hazard control if a child under six lives in the home: BPHC's Lead Program (617) 534-5966

**FALLS.** Children are more severely injured from window falls than from any other falls.

**What to do:** Install window guards/window locks or make sure that windows cannot open more than 4". Open windows from top down. Move furniture away from window.

**Who to call:** BPHC's Kids Can't Fly Program (617) 534-5197

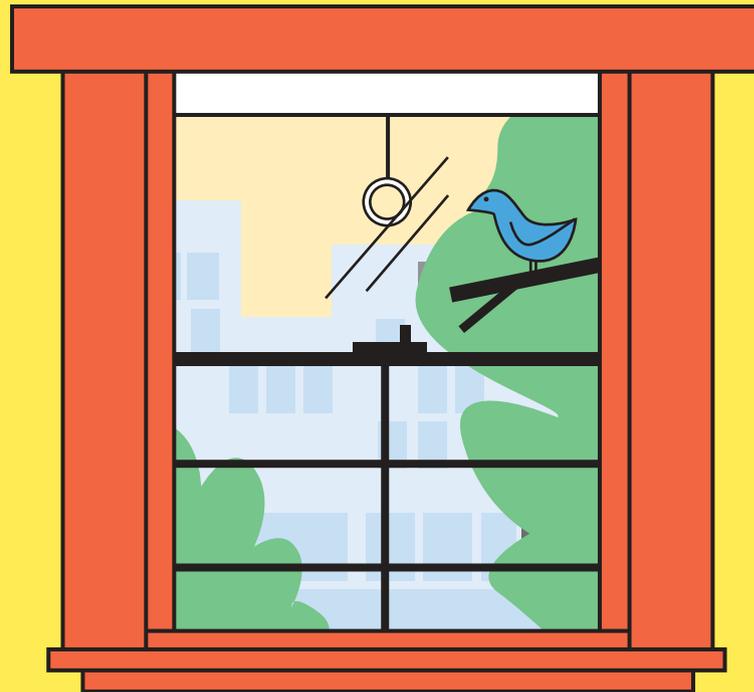
**CURTAINS AND VENETIAN BLINDS** collect dust which is an asthma trigger.

**What to do:** Wipeable shades are best. Wash fabric curtains in hot water weekly to kill dust mites.

**CORDS OF WINDOW BLINDS.** Children can strangle on the cords of window blinds and corded window shades.

**What to do:** Cut window cord loops and knot ends to prevent children from getting strangled.

**Who to call:** For free window safety kit:  
Window Covering Safety Council 1-800-506-4636



## space heaters

**SPACE HEATERS** can start fires.

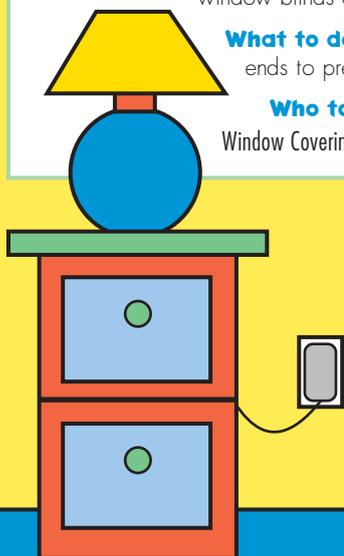
### What to do:

- Turn off the heater before leaving a room or before sleeping.
- Never put an extension cord on a radiator or space heater.
- Keep space heaters away from blankets and furniture.
- Have a working smoke alarm outside sleeping areas.
- Practice several fire escape routes from each room and choose a place to meet outside.

### Who to call:

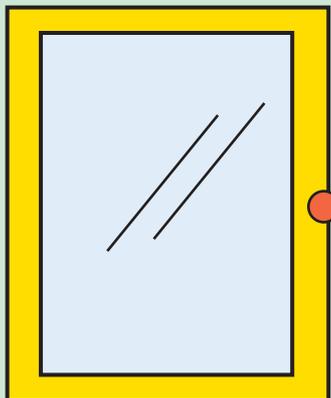
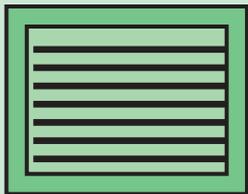
Emergency services 911

For fire safety, Boston Fire Department (617) 343-3397



# bedroom

## windows & walls



**LEAD** can be in paint on windows, walls, or doors. The paint can chip or peel and become dust. Lead dust cannot be seen and can poison children when they breath it in or ingest it by putting their fingers or items in their mouths.

### What to do:

- Cover exposed holes with wallpaper or contact paper on a temporary basis.
- Wet wipe surfaces regularly to keep lead dust down.
- Open windows from top down.
- Have your home inspected for lead by a licensed lead inspector.

**Who to call:** For free lead inspections and training for moderate risk deleading for property owners:

BPHC's Lead Program (617) 534-5966

## electrical outlets

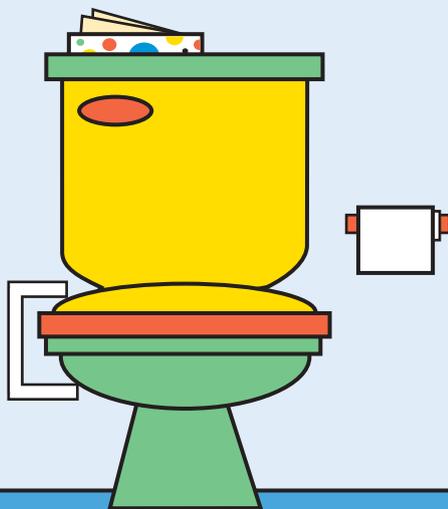
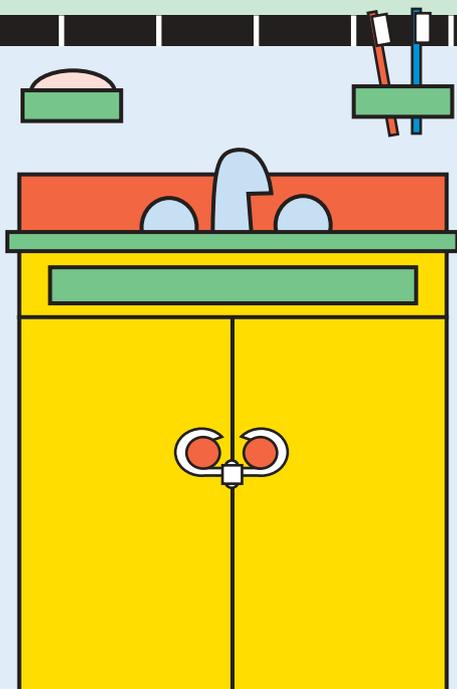
**FIRES AND ELECTRIC SHOCK.** Electric cords that are old or damaged can cause fires or electric shock.

### What to do:

- Use GFCI outlet (Ground Fault Circuit Interruption) in the bathroom to prevent electric shock.
- Store electrical appliances away from water and beyond your children's reach.
- Unplug and wind up appliance and extension cords after use.

### Who to call:

Your landlord to install GFCI outlets.



## sink/medicine cabinet

## bathtub

**STRONG ODORS, PERFUMES AND HAIR SPRAYS** are asthma triggers.

**What to do:**

- Open windows and doors when cleaning.
- Clean when the person with asthma is not home.
- Avoid products that are perfumed or have strong odors.
- When possible use soap and water instead of commercial cleaning products.

**POISONING FROM MEDICINE OR HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS.** Household cleaners have chemicals that can be toxic or produce toxic gases if mixed. Children can be poisoned by cleaners and medicines. Cleaners can also be asthma triggers.

**What to do:**

- Do not take medicine in front of young children since they may try to copy you. Buy products with safety caps or child-resistant caps.
- Store cleaning supplies, medicines and cosmetics in their original containers in cabinets and drawers with safety locks.
- Use as few household cleaners as possible and buy only what you need. Follow the directions for safe use and never mix different cleaners.

**Who to call:** Put poison control numbers on all phones:

Massachusetts Poison Center 1 (800) 222-1222  
Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966

**MOLD AND MOISTURE.** Chronic dampness leads to mold growth. Mold is an asthma trigger. The state sanitary code requires a bathroom fan or a window that opens.

**What to do:**

- Install a bathroom fan or a window that opens for ventilation.
- Repair pipe leaks.
- Keep surfaces clean and dry.
- Small amounts of mold can be washed off tiles and shower curtains with water and a small amount of bleach.

**Who to call:** Your landlord or Inspectional Services (617) 635-5322

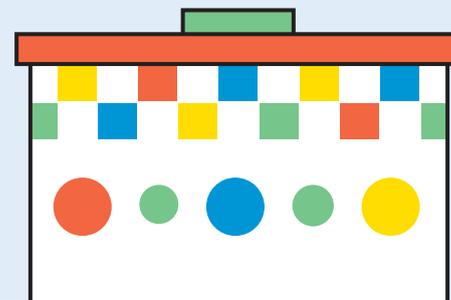
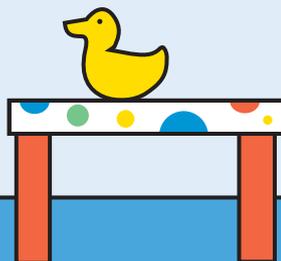
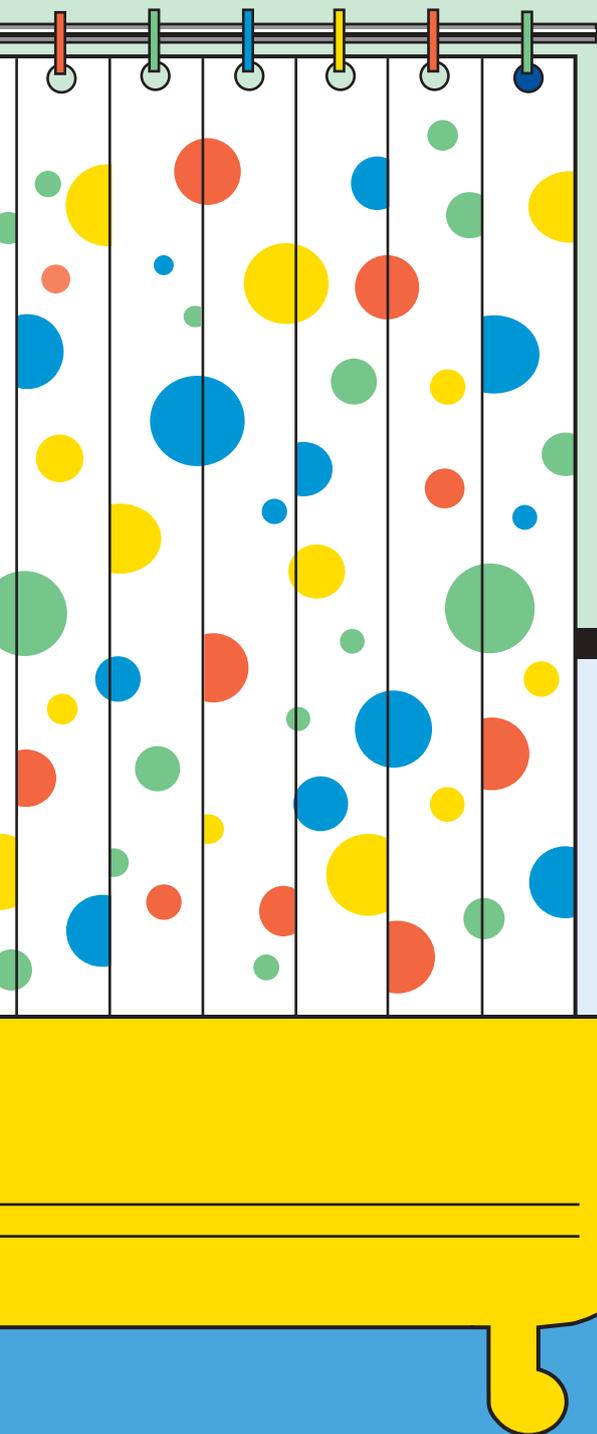
**BATHING.** Children have thinner, more sensitive skin than adults. A child exposed to hot water at 140° F for three seconds can get a severe burn. Children can drown in 1–2 inches of water.

**What to do:**

- Never leave your child alone in the bathroom.
- Set the temperature of the water heater to 120°F or lower.
- Cover exposed pipes.
- Place safety locks on the toilet lid.
- Empty water from cleaning buckets right after use.

**Who to call:**

Your landlord or a plumber to install anti-scald devices for faucets and showerheads.



# bathroom

## storage

**LAWN AND GARDEN CHEMICALS** (weed killers, bug killers, fertilizers) can cause skin or eye irritation, nausea, vomiting, learning disabilities, or brain damage.

### What to do:

- Use as little lawn and garden chemicals as possible. Buy only what you need.
- Don't use weed killers and other lawn products around children, pets, toys, or food.
- Store weed killer and lawn products in their original containers, closed tightly in a locked cabinet.
- Follow the directions for safe use.

### Who to call:

Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966  
Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau (617) 727-3020  
If a person is exposed to weed killers:  
Emergency Services 911

**AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS** are toxic chemicals. These products can cause nausea, cancer, and damage to the brain, liver and kidneys. Children and animals can be poisoned by antifreeze.

### What to do:

- Store automotive products in tightly closed original containers.
- Never store gasoline in the house.
- Follow the directions for safe use.
- Clean up any spills right away.

### Who to call:

Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966

## hot water heater, oil or gas furnace

**CARBON MONOXIDE GAS** from heating sources can build up and poison or kill people. Carbon monoxide is a gas that you cannot see or smell. Appliances that are not cleaned and well maintained produce more carbon monoxide.

### What to do:

- If you have any appliance in your home (furnace, hot water heater, stove) that burns gas, oil or coal, install one or more carbon monoxide detectors. If the detector goes off, call 911 and leave your house right away.
- Keep your home well ventilated to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Have fuel-burning appliances cleaned and serviced regularly.
- Don't warm up your car in the garage.

### Who to call:

Emergency Services 911  
Boston Fire Department (617) 343-3397  
Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966

**ASBESTOS** insulation on heaters, pipes, or in ceiling tiles. Breathing asbestos fibers can cause lung cancer and other types of cancer.

**What to do:** If there is asbestos in your home, do not remove it yourself. Hire a licensed asbestos contractor to remove or repair damaged asbestos materials.

**Who to call:** For contractor licenses or permits:

Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966

For a removal contractor or asbestos testing:  
Mass. Department of Labor & Workforce Development  
(617) 727-7047

## floors & walls

**MOLD AND MOISTURE.** Chronic dampness leads to mold growth. Mold is an asthma trigger.

### What to do:

- Don't sleep in your basement or garage.
- Keep the basement well ventilated to prevent dampness and mold.
- Throw out wall to wall carpeting in the basement.
- Store possessions in sealed plastic.

### Who to call:

Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966 or  
Inspectional Services (617) 635-5322

**FLOODING AND SEWAGE BACKUPS** can lead to serious health threats due to bacteria and chemical contamination of the water. Flooding can also cause mold growth which is an asthma trigger.

### What to do:

- Hire a professional to shut off gas and electrical utilities that are flooded.
- Pump out standing water into the sewer, not a storm drain.
- Throw out anything that is soaked by water such as carpets, clothing, books, furniture, and drywall. Clean surfaces with bleach and water.

### Who to call:

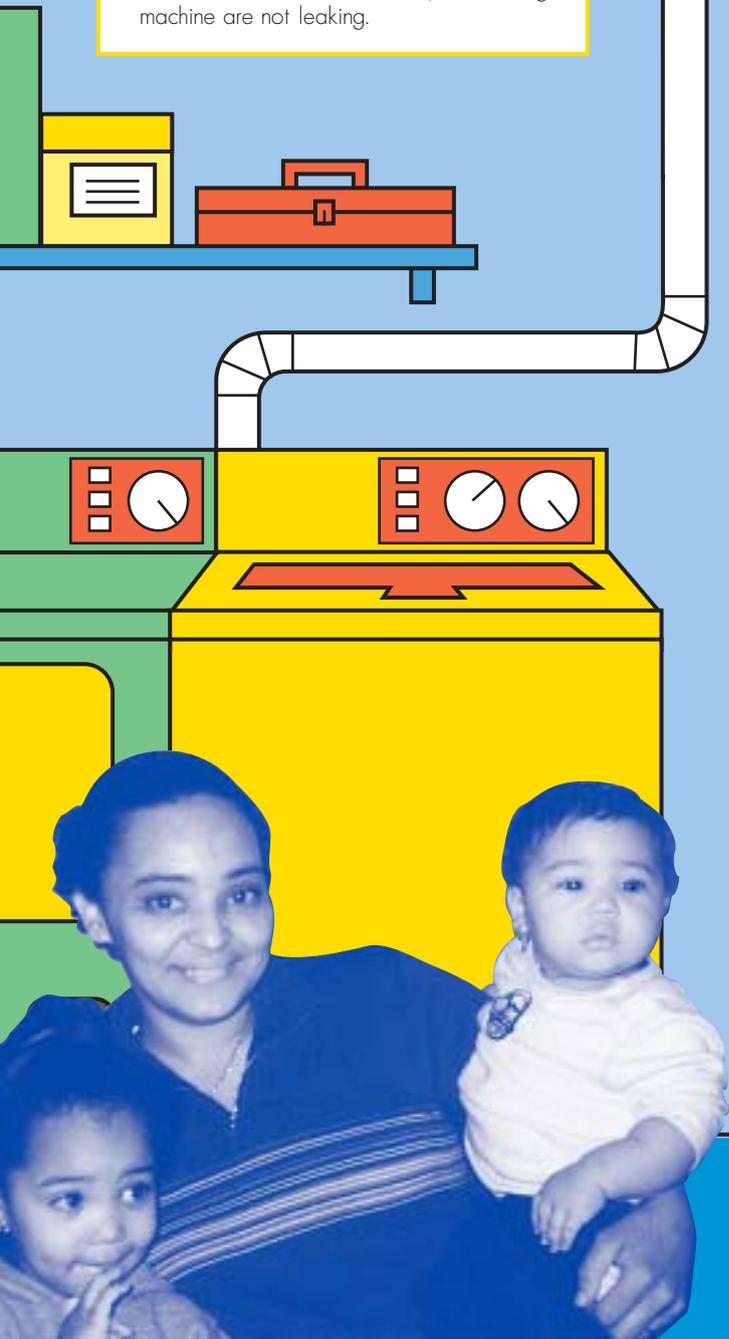
Environmental Health Office (617) 534-5966 or  
Mass. Water Resource Authority (617) 242-7314

## washer/dryer

**DRYERS** can collect dust which is an asthma trigger. **WASHER/DRYERS** that are not vented outdoors and not properly maintained can also create dust, moisture, mold, and fires.

### What to do:

- Clean filters in dryers often and make sure the dryer vents to the outside, not to the bathroom or another room.
- Make sure the water hoses in your washing machine are not leaking.



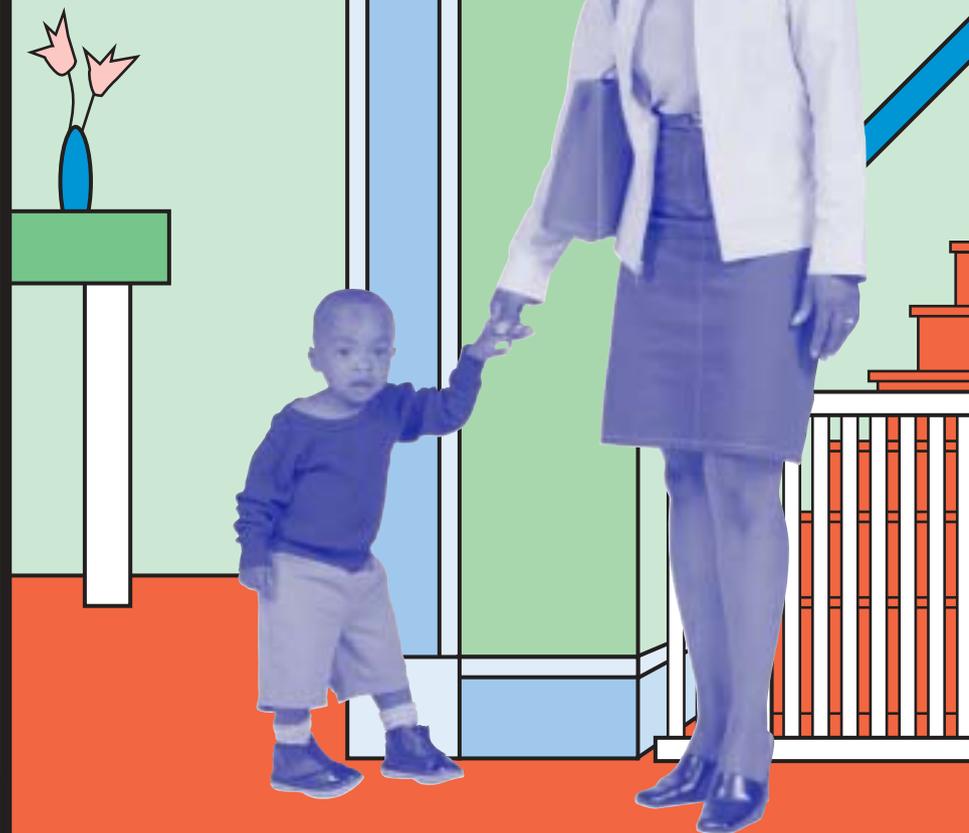
## stairways, halls and balconies

**FALLS** are the leading cause of unintentional injuries for children under age fourteen.

### What to do:

- Use non-accordion type toddler gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Gates that screw to the wall are more secure than "pressure gates."
- Make sure stairs and railings are in good condition. Halls and stairways are required by the state sanitary code to have good lighting.

**Who to call:** BPHC's Childhood Injury Prevention Program (617) 534-5197



## hall/stairs

## porch

### CHIPPING OR PEELING PAINT ON

**PORCH.** Many porches were painted with lead paint. Children can be poisoned by a small amount of lead.

**What to do:** Keep children off porch if it has old chipping or peeling paint until a licensed deleader removes the lead. Have your children's blood tested for lead every year until age four.

**Who to call:** For free lead inspections: BPHC's Lead Program (617) 534-5966

### UNSTABLE RAILINGS OR STAIRWAYS.

Children can fall from porches.

**What to do:** Make sure stairs, railings, porches and balconies are in good condition.

**Who to call:** For housing code violations: Inspectional Services (617) 635-5322

## soil and grass

**LEAD** can get in the soil of the yard or garden from gasoline and lead paint on the house and porch. Children can be poisoned by lead by eating dirt or dust from the soil. Some vegetables and plants in gardens can absorb high amounts of lead.

### What to do:

- Remove shoes before going inside.
- Have your children wash their hands right after playing outside.
- Don't eat or drink outside.
- Have your children play on grass or areas that have wood chips and not on bare soil.
- Keep outside toys outside and inside toys inside. Have the soil tested for lead.
- Plant vegetable gardens at least five feet away from the drip edge of the house.

### Who to call:

BPHC's Lead Program (617) 5345-5966

Testing soil for lead:

U Mass. Extension (413) 545-2311

### POLLEN, FLOWERS, PLANTS, TREES.

Many people are allergic to leaves, pollen, and recently mowed grass. These are asthma triggers.

**What to do:** Shower and change clothes after being outside to wash off allergens. Avoid outside activities during high allergen times.

**AIR POLLUTION SUCH AS SMOG AND GROUND LEVEL OZONE** is an asthma trigger. It can also cause respiratory or heart problems.

**What to do:** Avoid exercising or working outdoors during high pollution times.

## play equipment

**PLAY EQUIPMENT** can cause injury.

### What to do:

- Maintain 9–12 inches of wood chips, mulch, or sand under play equipment such as a swing set.
- Remove pole stubs and fragments.
- Repair broken chains.
- Install a fence to prevent children from leaving the yard.

**POOLS.** Children can drown in 1–2 inches of water.

**What to do:** Supervise children in a kiddie pool. Use door knob covers and door locks to prevent access to swimming pools.

### Who to call:

BPHC's Childhood Injury Prevention Program (617) 534-5197



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